

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 25 April 2018	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet Member for Children and Schools
<b>Report title:</b>		Grant Award to Children's Centre Providers	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>From:</b>		Director of Education	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools approves grants to lead agencies for the delivery of the Children's Centres programme for the 2018/19 financial year, as set out in paragraph 23.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Children's Centres are places where families with children under five can access a range of services and information and get help and advice from health, education and social care professionals. Their core purpose is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in child development, school readiness, health and life chances.
3. A report setting out a new model of Children's Centres delivery in Southwark was considered by Cabinet in June 2016, as a result of which Children's Centres have been organised on the basis of four geographical localities with a lead body in each co-ordinating staff and services across the area. This approach focuses on delivering universal and targeted services where they are needed in the community, using spaces that are accessible to children and families. A list of Children's Centres sites is included at Appendix One of this report.
4. Each Children's Centre lead agency employs a manager and staff team with a mixture of family support and early years practitioner roles, and also works in close partnership with agencies including the Council's Early Help services and NHS partners to deliver services including:
  - Family Support - 1:1 casework for families with complex needs who are referred by partners or stepped down from Social Care (CIN or CP); parenting programmes to support attachment and improve family relationships; targeted groups to meet identified needs (e.g. domestic abuse support group); counselling.
  - Play, learning & development – including baby and toddler groups; stay and play (universal and targeted); Bookstart sessions.
  - Education, Skills & Training to support parents into employment, including ESOL, Basic/functional skills, volunteering opportunities, vocational accredited skills, GCSEs/NVQs, First Aid
  - Advice & guidance on issues affecting children and families.
  - Health services (hosted by Children's Centres but delivered and resourced by NHS partner agencies) including ante-natal and post-natal groups and

activities; support for mental health and post-natal depression; nutrition/dietetics; breastfeeding support, speech and language support.

5. In March 2017, the Cabinet Member approved grants for the following Children's Centres lead agencies in 2017-18:
  - Borough, Bankside and Walworth: 1<sup>st</sup> Place Children & Parents Centre in partnership with Coin Street Community Builders.
  - Bermondsey and Rotherhithe: Pilgrims Way Primary School & Children's Centre.
  - Camberwell and Dulwich: Dulwich Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre.
  - Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye: Ivydale Primary School & Children's Centre.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Review of Children's Centre programme**

6. A service level agreement is in place with each Children's Centre lead agency setting out what they are expected to deliver in return for their grant funding. An annual performance review was undertaken by the Children's Centre consultant in November and December 2017 to assess the effectiveness of Children's Centres in making a difference to children and families in line with the requirements of the service level agreement. Key findings are set out in paragraphs 7 to 15 below.
7. Reach of services: in the 12 month period from October 2016 to September 2017, 21,884 individual children and adults attended a Children's Centre group, activity or one to one support. The total volume of contacts was 137,385 – an average of 6.3 contacts per service user.
8. Family Support: Children's centres have teams of Community Family Workers (CFW) who work on a casework basis with children and families requiring additional support as part of the Council's Early Help offer. Children's Centres use the Family Star+, a holistic tool that looks at 10 key areas of parenting and engages parents in a journey of change where they are key agents in the direction their lives will take. There is evidence from this of effective early intervention to stop difficulties from escalating and supporting children stepping down from a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan. In the period from April 2016 to September 2017, 491 families have accessed case work family support from Children's Centres. 63 children have been stepped down from Social Care to Children's Centres, of which only 6 cases have had to be later re-referred back up to Social Care.
9. Parenting Programmes: between October 2016 and September 2017, Southwark Children's Centres delivered 31 different evidence based parenting programmes attended by 317 parents. There was on average a 90% completion rate of programmes with evaluations and feedback showing improvements in 95% of attendees. While their parents have been attending these programmes, 456 children have attended high quality crèche provision where they have been assessed in terms of their development and plans put in place to extend their learning.

10. Play, learning and development: Children's centres provide a range of universal and targeted child development opportunities through different group activities such as Stay & Play for babies or toddlers and Bookstart sessions delivering with the library service. There are targeted activities aimed at particular groups including parents with multiple births, young parents, LGBT, fathers, adoptive families and children with additional needs. The objective of activities is to ensure children develop appropriately and are active learners who become 'school ready'. At any one time in Southwark there are approximately 70 sessions happening every week providing wide access for children and families.
11. Education, Skills and Training: there were 51 different courses delivered at Southwark children's centres between up October 2016 and until September 2017, including ESOL, accredited vocational courses, first aid, basic literacy and numeracy courses and employability support. At least 540 different Southwark parents/carers of under-5s have attended a course at their local children's centre. Course evaluations, feedback and exam pass rates show on average 88% completion rate and high levels of pass rates and user satisfaction. Centres are now developing a Southwark-wide education and learning strategy with clear pathways and tracking systems to demonstrate achievements and employability rates.
12. Health services: in the year up to September 2017, Southwark Children's Centres hosted over 50 health clinics, courses and drop-ins, including groups focused on domestic abuse, post-natal depression, baby weaning, healthy eating and other issues. Following changes in local authority commissioning and funding arrangements, additional Children's Centres funding for health services has been phased out. However strong working partnerships continue between Children's Centres and NHS partners to ensure families can continue to access health provision at Children's Centres.
13. A new database monitoring system for Children's Centres, Synergy Connect+, went live in August 2017 and further reports on service use and performance in individual Children's Centres will be available by the end of March 2018.
14. In March 2017, two of the four Children's Centre teams were fully staffed and operational (Borough, Bankside and Walworth and Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye), a third was making good progress with clear plans in place (Bermondsey and Rotherhithe) while some concerns were raised about progress in the Camberwell and Dulwich locality. Following challenge and support in 2017/18, the review has found that lead agencies in all four localities now have in place:
  - a functioning Strategic Development Board that meets termly to agree priorities, inform development plans as well as provide support and challenge to the leadership teams;
  - well-developed staff structures, with clear supervision, appraisal and support mechanisms for staff development
  - strong safeguarding arrangements.
15. Children's Centres were highlighted in the Ofsted Single Inspection of Southwark Children's Services with the June 2017 report stating that 'Younger children who have emerging and additional needs are helped through an extensive range of services clustered around children's centres. A reorganisation of children's centres is showing early signs of more efficient multi-agency practice and

coordination of services. Better-informed targeting of vulnerable groups is providing the right children and families with help’.

### **Policy implications**

16. The Childcare Act 2006 (“the Act”) places a range of duties on local authorities in relation to the provision of early childhood services (which includes early-years provision and health and social services for young children, parents and prospective parents, together with and employment and other advice for parents and prospective parents).
17. The council is under a general duty to improve the well-being of young children in its area and reduce inequalities between them, in relation to matters such as physical and mental health and emotional well-being; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution made by them to society; and social and economic well-being.
18. Specifically, the council is required:
  - to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents; and
  - to take steps to identify prospective users of services and encourage their take up;
  - To facilitate as far as possible the participation of parents and providers of services in the planning of early childhood services.
19. The arrangements for the provision of early childhood services must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. Where Children's Centres are provided, the council and partner organisations must consider whether to provide early childhood services through Children's Centres.
20. A Children's Centre is defined in the Act as a place or a group of places through which integrated early childhood services are made available for young children, parents and prospective parents, including:
  - early years provision (early education and childcare);
  - children's social care;
  - health services;
  - training and employment services
  - information and advice services
21. Other requirements for the council, in relation to the organisation and management of Children's Centres, includes ensuring that:
  - there are sufficient Children's Centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need;
  - each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board;
  - there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision in their area.
22. ‘Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance’ (DfE, 2013) defines ‘the core purpose of Children's Centres’ as being ‘to improve outcomes for young children

and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances’.

### Resource implications: Budget and financial issues

23. In view of the continuing progress of the Children’s Centres programme and improved evidence of its effectiveness, it is proposed that Southwark continues to provide grants to enable the delivery of the programme in 2018-19 as follows:

Locality	Lead Agency	Number of children under 5	2017/18 Funding	2018/19 funding
Bermondsey and Rotherhithe	Pilgrims Way Primary School	4500	554,010	533,235
Borough, Bankside and Walworth	1st Place Children and Parents Centre	5735	436,845	420,463
	Coin Street Centre Trust		118,406	113,966
Camberwell and Dulwich	Dulwich Wood Nursery School & Children’s Centre	5815	618,142	594,962
Peckham and Nunhead & Peckham Rye	Ivydale Primary School	4230	698,688	672,487
(Central Children’s Centres budget)			23,510	53,185
Total		20280	2,449,601	2,388,298

24. The baseline amount per locality was calculated based on the IDACI scale which measures deprivation for children based on a range of economic, housing and social issues and then ranks them in order of need. The funding for children is then weighted using this scale so that areas with the greatest need attract proportionally appropriate budgets. This formula is in line with that used for school funding allocations.

25. The central Children’s Centre budget is retained to support the council’s functions of providing strategic leadership, quality assurance and ICT infrastructure to the Children’s Centres programme. It has been increased following representations from Children’s Centres on the importance of this role. The council may also top-slice agreed amounts from Locality CC budgets to cover premises costs of Children’s Centre buildings where applicable.

26. The total budget is slightly lower than in the previous two years. This is to reflect the fact that there has been some end of year underspend across the Children’s Centre providers in previous years. Service level agreements with Children’s Centres will specify that current service levels will be maintained.

27. The council may top-slice agreed amounts from Locality CC budgets to cover

premises costs of Children's Centre buildings where applicable.

### **Community impact statement**

28. The Public Sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard when carrying out their activities to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. The council's Approach to Equality ("the approach") commits the council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.
29. "Protected characteristics" are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful - the characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
30. As the Children's Centres programme is focused on young children and their families, the decision to continue to resource it would be expected to have a particularly positive impact on:
  - Children under the age of five;
  - Parents of young children, in particular women who make up the highest proportion of parents using Children's Centre services;
  - The communities amongst which young children are concentrated: amongst children under five in Southwark the three largest ethnic groups are White British, Nigerian and Black Caribbean, though Children's Centres are used by all sections of the community.

### **Financial implications**

31. See comments of the departmental finance manager – paragraph 35.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

#### **Director of Law and Democracy**

32. The cabinet member is asked to approve the award of grant funding to each of the lead agencies for the financial year 2018/19. This is a decision the cabinet member is permitted to take in accordance with the council's constitution.
33. The duties on the council in relation to the provision of early childhood services and the provision of those services through Children's Centres are outlined in the policy implications section of the report. The council has a specific duty to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner, and these arrangements must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need.
34. In relation to the payment of grants to the specified lead agencies, the council has a subsidiary power to do any thing (which might involve expenditure or not) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. The payment of grants, being incidental to the performance of the council's statutory functions in relation to the provision of early childhood

services as described above, is therefore considered to be within the council's power.

35. The cabinet member is reminded of the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and when making decisions to have regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (Departmental Finance Manager)**

36. The proposed model remains within budget constraints for 2018/19:

<b>Children Centres Funding</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Budget 2017/18		<b>2,449,997</b>
<u>Proposed allocations 2018/19</u>		
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Children and Parents Centre	420,463	
Coin Street Trust	113,966	
Pilgrims Way Primary School	533,235	
Dulwich Wood Children's Centre	594,962	
Ivydale Primary School	672,487	
		2,335,113
Centrally retained		53,185
<b>Budget 2018/19</b>		<b>2,388,298</b>

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
None		

**APPENDICES**

<b>No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Children's Centre service delivery sites

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Cheryl Rhodes, Children's Centre Consultant, Neil Gordon-Orr, Strategic Manager, Education Access	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	25 April 2018	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		25 April 2018